



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

September/October 2012

In Memoriam: Bob Arthurs (5/19/1950 – 8/25/12)

By Jacco Gelderloos

When I was asked to write this reflection on long-time Washtenaw Audubon member Bob Arthurs, who passed away much too soon at age 62 on August 25th, I was struck by the realization that I could not recall with certainty when we first met. It must have been some time in the early 2000s, but I honestly cannot say when exactly. With regularity, we would run into each other at WAS meetings, or at the site of a local rare bird, but for the first few years our contact was rather infrequent and indirect, though always pleasant.

Thankfully, this changed with the advent of so-called Township Ticking in Washtenaw County (courtesy of Don Chalfant), where the objective is to try and see as many species as possible in each of the County's 20 townships. Trying to outdo Don, I was bitten by this bug pretty seriously, but once Bob caught the affliction, he went for it with even more gusto. In pursuit of Don, Bob and I became entangled in (exceedingly) friendly competition, which would often take the form of calls along the lines of "Hey, do you need a Shrike in Salem? I'm looking at one at Five Mile & Curtis right now." On some weekends, we'd talk tick birds multiple times in the interest of our joint pursuit of Don, as well as the overall target of 3,000 total ticks (i.e., an average of 150 species in each of the 20 townships – Bob managed to hit this major milestone during 2011). This mutual assistance reached its zenith during the White-winged Crossbill irruption of 2008-2009, during which Bob had the stated goal of seeing this rarity in each township. He called me every single time he found crossbills (I tried

to return the favor as much as I could) and I was fortunate enough to share his exhilaration when he managed to record the species in his 20th township – an amazing feat.

During these years, our run-ins increased almost exponentially, and I came to appreciate Bob not only as a very capable birder, but as a kind and, above all, funny person; it seemed the mischievous twinkle in his eye was there permanently. Although birding is at times a largely solitary pursuit, it's people like Bob who make it such an enjoyable hobby (obsession) from a social perspective. Locally, Bob and his wife Carol were a fixture at the annual Wingnut Awards, where the trophy for the highest annual bird count in Washtenaw County is handed out, especially once Bob's annual tallies started vying for the award – he would end up winning the trophy in 2009 (232 species), 2010 (223, jointly with Roger Wykes), and 2011 (230). At these meetings, my wife Stephanie (not a birder, really) met Bob and commented to me how she was very pleasantly struck by his sense of humor and, above all, his kindness. It's no small feat to stand out for those qualities in a group of generally kind and friendly folk, but Bob managed to do just that.

(Additional photos pg. 2, Memorial continued pg. 5) 1



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Top photo, L to R: Bob, Carol Watson, Sara Arthurs, Claire Aniela Arthurs

Bottom, L to R: Sara Arthurs, Carol Watson, Claire Aniela Arthurs, Bob



Rare Bird Alerts

Michigan Bird Report

<http://birdingonthe.net/birdmail.html>

Scroll down to Michigan, Mich-listers, and SE Michigan

Help us purchase this key property for Haehnle Sanctuary

A remarkable opportunity has materialized for the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary Committee to acquire the only remaining private land projecting into the Sanctuary. The Edward Klee property includes 48 acres of wetlands and uplands, and its purchase would ensure protection of the marsh where thousands of Sandhill Cranes normally gather in the fall. About one-third of the property is in the marsh and one-third is wet woodlands and fen, and the remainder is uplands bordering Seymour Road. The uplands have the potential for residential development, but Mr. Klee hoped that his land would be sold to a conservation organization.

Why are we so interested? This is a keystone parcel for the Sanctuary, because it will:

- Ensure that 100% of Mud Lake marsh will stay natural, forever.
- Provide added protection for Sandhill Cranes in the event Michigan follows suit with other states in opening a crane hunting season.
- Protect a threatened ecosystem, a prairie fen of more than 29 acres.
- Protect a spring that flows from the property to Mud Lake Marsh.
- Offer additional wildlife viewing and photographic opportunities for the Sanctuary's visitors.

Michigan Audubon, our parent organization, and Jackson Audubon Society, stewards of Haehnle Sanctuary, have enthusiastically endorsed this venture. Both Audubon societies are established conservation organizations, each with a long history in education, leadership and the preservation of natural areas. Together they have acquired 466 acres at Haehnle through gifts or purchases since the initial gift of 497 acres in 1955. They have restored more than 150 acres of degraded wetland and established 40 acres of native grasses and wildflowers in the upland. Haehnle Sanctuary has become a refuge for a variety of wildlife, including some rare species of plants and animals. The hill overlooking the marsh has a kiosk with informational displays and benches for viewing the large number of cranes that come to the marsh in October and November. Additional activities and restorations have helped establish Haehnle Sanctuary as one of the premier sanctuaries of Michigan Audubon.

Our goal is to raise \$200,000, and we are off to a good start. Through the efforts of Michigan Audubon, Jackson Audubon Society, and Washtenaw we have already raised over \$90,000. We are now seeking funds from other conservation organizations, foundations, and individual donors.

You can help enrich the quality of life in our community and protect vital crane habitat by enlarging the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary. Gifts should be made payable to either Jackson Audubon Society, P.O. Box 6453, Jackson, MI 49204 or Michigan Audubon, c/o Ronald Hoffman, 6142 E Territorial Rd., Pleasant Lake, 49272. In each case place Haehnle Land Acquisition Fund in the memo line. Both are tax-exempt 501(c) (3) organizations. For gifts other than cash (such as stock, bequests, trusts) or for more information, please call Latham Claflin at 517-522-3949. We welcome donations both large and small.

66th Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 15, 2012

Although afternoons still feel very much like summer, there is a distinct fall chill in the air in the morning. Early migrants have already come and gone, later migrants are passing through now, and it will only be a matter of time before our winter visitors from up north will be arriving. In short, before we know it, it'll be time for another edition of the Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count!

This year, the count will be the 66th time local volunteers will be scouring local parks, roadsides, and feeders on our CBC, both in hopes of finding rarities and knowing that their efforts will contribute one more piece to the picture that is the CBC dataset. As always, the unusual species we find will get most of the press, but of more interest in real terms will be the trends that can be discerned from our count's results. Will we miss American Kestrel, a species that has declined precipitously during the past decade or so? Will our woodpeckers continue to do well with ongoing ash borer infestations? How do our results fit in with the continent-wide trends?

As always, your contribution to answering these questions (and more) is crucial, so all are invited to participate in the 66th annual Ann Arbor CBC, sponsored by the Washtenaw Audubon Society. This year, **Saturday, December 15th** is the date to pencil in on your calendars. Experience in identifying birds is not absolutely necessary as you can always be grouped with more experienced candidates.

As hinted at above, the Ann Arbor CBC is part of a hemisphere-wide (and growing) effort coordinated by the National Audubon Society. In years past, the NAS charged a \$5.00 participation fee, but this year NAS announced that participation would be free! The National Audubon Society publishes the data from each CBC and mails a copy of this compilation to participants (last year's data compilation should arrive in our mailboxes shortly). More importantly, the data we, the CBC volunteers, collect, is displayed on the NAS website in ways that we can easily manipulate: for example, was the large number of Red-breasted Nuthatches we found in Ann Arbor part of a continent-wide irruption? Check it (and much more!) out at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

All CBCs are conducted during a 3-week period from mid-December to early January, all over the Western (and even a small part of the Eastern) Hemisphere. Each count circle covers an area 15 miles in diameter; the Ann Arbor count circle is centered on the Foster Road bridge, near the intersection of Maple Road and Huron River Dr. – http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/Resources/AA-CBC-Map_full.pdf shows the count circle in immaculate detail. The object is to identify all bird species present in this circle and count the number in which they are present. In addition to the daylight bird census, several observers will conduct a predawn search for owls.

There are several ways to participate in this count, the main one of which is field observer. The Ann Arbor CBC area comprises eight regions, each of which is assigned to an area leader who coordinates the census in that region. If you wish to be a field observer, select one of the eight regions (for more information on the specific count areas, please check out the detailed maps on the WAS website) and sign up with the area leader of that region. If you are not sure where to help census, call me (CBC Compiler Jacco Gelderloos) at (734) 973-9422 and I will assign you to an area based on need. The National Audubon Society web site also has a system for signing up for counts across the nation. If you sign up through this service, please contact me by phone or email me at JJGelderloos@yahoo.com to let me know you have done so, as I will need to place you into an area within the count circle.

You can also be a feeder watcher. If you have a feeder within the count circle this is a fun and easy way to participate. (**Remember:** the feeder MUST be within the count circle, otherwise the data is invalid.) Like field observers, you may sign up to participate for any length of time – from one hour to all day. Call feeder watch coordinator Kurt Hagemester for more information, to sign up, or to get feeder watch forms.

The real fun and excitement happens at the end of the day at the potluck supper, when the final results are tallied and announced after dessert. This year, the potluck supper will be held at the meeting room at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens - all participants are invited! If you plan to attend, please contact the potluck coordinator Nicole Sefton to let us know you're coming and to coordinate dishes – please note that alcohol is not permitted on the premises. The MBG are located at 1800 N Dixboro Rd, about ¼ - ½ mile south of Plymouth Rd in Ann Arbor. Shortly after last year's potluck, the University of Michigan instituted a \$1.20/hour fee at the Botanical Gardens. Area leaders will have maps/directions if you needed; plan to gather there around 5:30-6:00 p.m.

Please remember that the CBC is run entirely by volunteers and can always use your help. Consider helping out with the potluck set-up and clean-up: we can always use people who arrive early at the potluck site to set up tables and chairs and help prepare for the arrival and arrangement of food. This may also entail getting supplies such as tablecloths, plates, etc. (costs will be reimbursed by WAS). After the supper, we will need to clean up as well. Remember: many hands make light work!

Information regarding the count will also be available on the Ann Arbor CBC web page (<http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/aacbc>) where any updates will be posted as the count day approaches.

AreaLeaders	Phone	E-mail
1 TBA – contact Jacco G	(734) 973-9422	jjgelderloos@yahoo.com
2 Rob & Nancy French	(734) 994-8418	rwfrenchjr@comcast.net
3 Roger Wykes	(734) 769-6482	
4 Cathy Carroll	(313) 595-4562	songsparrow@wowway.com
5 Mike & Susan Kielb	(734) 239-6064	makielb@comcast.net
6 Jacco Gelderloos	(734) 973-9422	jjgelderloos@yahoo.com
7 Don Chalfant	(734) 665-3120	screech-owl@comcast.net
8 Mike Sefton		mseft@yahoo.com

CBC Compiler: Jacco Gelderloos
(734) 973-9422 or jjgelderloos@yahoo.com

Feeder Watch Coordinator: Kurt Hagemeister
(734) 663-9746 or khagemeister@sbcglobal.net

Potluck Coordinator: Nicole Sefton seftonn1344@yahoo.com

Ann Arbor CBC Web Site: <http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/aacbc/>

National Audubon Society: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>

(Bob Arthurs continued from Pg. 1)

During 2011, Bob and I would be caught up in friendly competition again, when our Wingnut tallies were matched well into December. Knowing how much he would like to win the Wingnut Award, I was still amazed when Bob called me to let me know he was sorry for going after a Great Black-backed Gull on Ford Lake, thus beating my tally for the year. True to his form, he urged me to try and find a tying species and committed to calling me in case he did. For me, this episode captures Bob's essence: competitive, but kind and always willing to share a good bird with others.

Of late, other birders in the state experienced the joy of Bob's competitive drive in another of his pursuits: annual state listing. In addition to accumulating an impressive Michigan state life list of 342 species, Bob was trying hard to get to the mythical 300-species mark for a given year. After seeing 274 species in 2010 and 284 in 2011, he had already recorded a whopping 278 species at the time of his passing, and seemed well within reach of 300 for the year. He passed away after seeing number 279, a Hudsonian Godwit, at Pointe Mouillee SGA in Monroe County. Bob died doing what he loved, at a place he loved, with the woman he loved, leaving sadness and an overwhelming sense of loss. On the other hand, he leaves a legacy of kindness, humor, and, above all, a willingness to help and share with others – what a joy to have known Bob and the ever-present twinkle in his eyes.

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (October, 2012--Feb., 2013)

By Monty Brown, Field Trip Coordinator (fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org)

Washtenaw Audubon field trips are free of charge and open to the public unless otherwise indicated. For trips with constraints on the number of participants, WAS members are sometimes given priority in registering (again, as indicated). *For trips that require carpooling, minors attending without a parent must bring a written permission statement signed by a parent.* To receive a standard form for this, contact me at the e-mail address above. Also, if you have a suggestion for a field trip, please send it to me at that e-mail address.

**Thursdays,
August 30
through the
end of
October**

Fall Migration Walks in Nichols Arboretum This is the seventh year of these popular, leaderless walks to observe the spring and fall migrations at The Arb. Every Thursday morning through the end of October participants will gather at 8:00 at the end of the Riverview Drive cul-de-sac (off Geddes Road) near the eastern edge of the arboretum. The assembled birders will choose a route or routes and head out in search of migrants. The walks go until roughly 11:00, but everyone can join or leave the group as his or her schedule requires. These walks are a great, low-key way to get started in birdwatching.

**Sunday,
October 14**

The Big Sit (Independence Lake County Park) Leader: Don Chalfant. This is a low-key international competition that Don has participated in for the past fourteen years. The task is to try to identify by sight or sound as many bird species as possible while remaining in a circle of 17 feet in diameter. For participants other than Don, the timing can be completely flexible. You can arrive before dawn to join in the owling or you can come after breakfast, before the Lions game, in the afternoon--whatever works for you. It is also a great outing for those with restricted mobility since everything takes place in a fixed spot. For those staying for any significant amount of time, we recommend bringing food and a chair, in addition to your binoculars.

**Saturday,
November 3**

Cranes in Jackson County Leader: Lathe Claflin. During the fall, eastern Jackson County is a lively area for cranes preparing to migrate south for the winter. [Haehnle Sanctuary](#) and other nearby locations can have thousands of Sandhill Cranes at a time. Meet at the Park-and-Ride lot at Miller Road and M-14 by 3:15 to carpool to Jackson County. Alternatively, you can meet the group at the Park-and-Ride lot near the northwest corner of Mt. Hope and I-94 (exit 150) at 4:00. Lathe will lead the group on a field walk to try to see cranes and any other interesting birds, and then we will go to whichever wetland has been the most active roosting spot and watch the cranes fly in for the night.

**Saturday,
December 8**

Gull Trip to Salem Landfill Leader: Rob French. Because access to the landfill is highly restricted, we rent a van for the trip and have to limit the number of participants. WAS members are given priority, but we will keep a list of non-members who tell us they would like to go, and if there is still space available, we open it up to as many of them as we can accommodate. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at the far end of the Park-n-Ride lot at Plymouth Road and US 23. This trip will take about 4 hours. Please note that the weather for this outing tends to be very cold. Dress warmly! If you want to attend this trip, please e-mail your name and a contact phone number to fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org.

**Friday,
February 1-
Sunday,
February 3,
2013**

Birding the Soo Leaders: Lathe Claflin and Gary Siegrist. This annual winter trip to the environs of Sault Ste. Marie in the upper peninsula is co-sponsored by Jackson Audubon and Washtenaw Audubon. We will provide more information as details for 2013 are confirmed.

Hudson Mills Metropark Trip Report (September 9) *By Karen Markey*

Our band of 32 intrepid birders experienced the agony and ecstasy of birding fall migrants. As long as the sun didn't shine, the birds were dripping from the treetops. The poor lighting conditions and the dense fall foliage that the birds seemed to prefer made it difficult for everyone to definitively identify the many, many birds winging their way from tree to tree. Eventually the sun came out, improving the light conditions, but there were fewer birds. Some highlights of the trip were two Red-breasted Nuthatches at the start, a lone Blue-winged Warbler sitting high atop a dead tree in full view for all, a Downy Woodpecker in view at every stop, and on our final loop through the park, stunning looks at a Yellow-throated Vireo, an unobstructed close-up view of a Black-and-White Warbler, and our first and only Chestnut-sided and Wilson's Warblers of the day. Thanks to the many birders who spotted birds and helped others find them. Special thanks to Sarah Toner who compiled the list and posted it to eBird. Let's do this again next fall!

53 species total: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Great Egret (3 flying over as we drove into HMM), Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Least Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak (1 heard only), Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch

To become a member of Washtenaw Audubon Society, please complete the form below (or a copy) and mail it with a check or money order payable to **Washtenaw Audubon Society - WAS Membership**
PO Box 130923, Ann Arbor, MI 48113

_____ RENEWAL _____ NEW MEMBER

_____ ADDITIONAL DONATION \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership Dues:

___ Individual/Household \$25
(on-line only \$20)

___ Student \$10
(emailed newsletters only)

___ Senior \$15
(on-line only \$10)

___ Patron \$50

We encourage you to join at a lower rate if the suggested rates would otherwise preclude your membership, or at a higher rate if you possess the means.

Note: WAS will only use your email address to communicate with you about WAS programs, field trips, or matters of interest to you, such as membership renewal, and emailed WAS newsletters (in color!). We will not give your email address to anyone else.

WAS Monthly Programs

WAS monthly events usually are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Programs begin at 7:30pm at U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Free and open to the public. Call 994-3569 if you have questions about the program.

Please note: *The Matthaei Botanical Gardens charges for parking at the rate of \$1.20 an hour, enforced 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm. Members of the Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum park for free. This fee brings the Garden's policies into alignment with other University of Michigan venues, and provides revenue to maintain the Gardens. If you arrive at 7:15pm for a 7:30pm Washtenaw Audubon program, you will only have to pay 90 cents to park for the 45 minutes before enforcement ends at 8pm. The parking kiosks accept coins, bills and credit cards.*

October 17

Birding in Fiji: Join birder and photographer Kevin Sharp for an exploration of the south sea islands of exotic Fiji. In addition to coconut palm-lined white sand beaches, this western Polynesian archipelago has a fascinating avifauna, including Masked Shining-Parrots, Metallic Pigeons, and the elusive (and recently rediscovered) Long-legged Thicketbird. Kevin Sharp pushes tofu and organic bananas at the Ann Arbor People's Food Co-op, and enjoys birding in far-away lands.

November 14

Exploring the Florida Peninsula: Join Tom Hodgson for a program on birds and other animals of the Sunshine State. Tom often photographs his subjects from a canoe, which sometimes allows him to get very close to his subject, resulting in excellent photos. Tom Hodgson is a retired environmental educator and natural history interpreter for the Michigan DNR.

December

Join us for the Christmas Bird Count!

Washtenaw Audubon Society

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